

# Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

## *Episode #149: How to Live an Immeasurably More Life*

- Amy: Well, Wendy, we are so glad you are back with us.
- Wendy: I'm so excited to back with y'all professional girls. I'm so impressed with what y'all can do.
- Amy: That's amazing, Cheri. Hey, we've got to run that one in.
- Cheri: Absolutely.
- Wendy: I feel so ... I don't know what's going on half the time. Technology is amazing and it is my nemesis.
- Cheri: We keep it going with duct tape and chewing gum. I swear.
- Wendy: Oh, that's good, yes. Add a paper clip and you're MacGyver.
- Cheri: Paper clip. That's what I was missing.
- Wendy: Yes, that's what you were missing.
- Amy: Well Wendy, we loved your first book, Wait and See, so much. Tell us what led you to write Yes, No, Maybe?
- Wendy: Wow. I didn't set out to write this book honestly. It was a message that I developed early on in my speaking. The very first She Speaks that I went to, when we left there, we were challenged to go home and write some messages that we could share and we could lead retreats and conferences with. Well, I didn't have any idea what I was doing. No idea what I was doing. I remember going to She Speaks and going okay Lord, I know I'm coming here but I don't know what I'm supposed to say. And how am I supposed to do this whole thing? I don't know all the books of the Bible in order at this point in my life, unless I sing the little song. You know?
- So, I don't remember even how it all came to be. I just remember being immersed in the scriptures at the time. There was a lot of things going on in my life and in my family that weren't very happy. And I had decided at this point,

maybe I ought to spend some time with God. Hey, what a novel idea. And possibly even read the Bible. Wow. Especially, since I'm going to be a Bible teacher.

So, I began spending time with God every single morning and during those quiet times is the times that I began to hear the whispers of messages that he wanted me to teach. Never did I think that I would have to live out the message

Amy: Oh, yeah. Bummer.

Wendy: Yes, ouch. Bummer. That I would have to live this out. And I remember when I was getting trained early on and those people that mentored and have taught us, Amy, through Proverbs, you know three points in a poem. I remember, three points in a poem. And throw some scripture in there if you can. And I really liked the idea of yes to God, no to self, maybe to others. That really sounded great and so then, God called me to start living that out. And it's taken a long time for me to live that out and for God to give me the opportunity to put it on paper and know that this is part of my life now. This is not just something that I teach and think that this is a great message for somebody else. It's something that I live. You have to live it.

Cheri: Yeah. That's when it becomes real. So, you talk about how we are weighed down by the uns of life. So, tell us what you mean by the uns of life and how do they weigh us down?

Wendy: Anything that keeps us from experiencing the fullness of God is what I would call an un. And I remember sitting down and writing this section of the book listing things that were major disappointments in my life and things that I blamed God for. I was mad at God for this or why didn't he do that? And he could have done this, and all of these things. And I thought to myself at the time, this list is really long. So, how can I put this in just some simple points that would encapsulate all the things that I had been dealing with, disappointments and unanswered prayers.

And so, I just ... The Lord just led me to these four points of disappointments and unanswered prayers and unfulfilled dreams and unmet expectations. And it just encapsulates so many of ... so much of what we feel and what brings us down and keeps us, excuse me, from experiencing the fullness of God. Because we can experience him with the reality of an unfulfilled dream. And we can experience him to his fullness and with his fullness and in his fullness with an unanswered prayer and with an unmet expectation. And I could not ... I didn't know that you could do that. You know? I couldn't separate the two.

And through living the disciplines of this book, I realized that he is immeasurably more, even in those places that are uns in my life. And I choose to, at this point, look at them differently. I talk about in the book the fact that the meaning of immeasurably more is super abundantly, is what that word means or what that phrase means in Ephesians 3:20. And I love to redefine my uns by saying that God is greater than the sum of my failures. Or God is greater than the sum of my past experiences. And God is greater than the sum of the hopes that I had and God is greater than the sum of my accomplishments and my bank accounts. And I listed some of those there. And that he can super abundantly, super abundantly, meet my expectations. Super abundantly fulfill my dreams.

And most of the time ... Not most of the time, let me just back that train back up ... all of the time, all of the time, his super abundance, his super abundant provision and answer and response to all of my uns is better than anything I could have ever dreamed or imagined. But we have to wait on God to bring us to that place and be able to accept that this is a little bit different than what I thought it was going to be, God, but this is so much better.

Cheri: Well, you also say that every soul saved has a Damascus road experience that's just waiting to be told. Can you unpack this a little bit for our listeners?

Wendy: Sure. Constantly in the Bible, we are seeing where God is the pursuer. He planted that tree for Zacchaeus a long time before Zacchaeus was born because Zacchaeus was going to one day climb that tree to see the Lord. So, God and the Holy Spirit are constantly pursuing us. They are constantly wanting to have interaction with us every single day, every single moment. They want to be part of our makeup and in every decision that we make. And he is pursuing us and he wants to meet us wherever we are. On the Damascus road is where Paul met him. But somebody else might meet him at an abortion clinic. Somebody else might have a Damascus road experience right in church. Can you imagine? Or at a conference, at a retreat, maybe even in the grocery store when you're talking to somebody that you just feel led to witness to. So, that Damascus road is a place to me ... I'm just defining it as someplace very unusual and very unexpected and God is going to pursue everybody. It's up to us and up to the individual whether or not we're going to respond to the pursuit.

Cheri: All right. I love that. Now, I did find a statement in your book that I disagree with. You said talking about sin isn't fun but it's freeing. And the truth is, I'm very comfortable talking about sin. I could talk about Amy's sin all day long.

Amy: Hey!

Cheri: But in all seriousness, we perfectionists are allergic to talking about our own sins.

Wendy: Yes.

Cheri: So, why should we talk about it and how does that free us?

Wendy: Well, the Bible gives reference to and if I was a Bible scholar and knew these references right off the top of my head, I could give them to you. But I cannot give them to you right off the top of my head. But scripture does say and supports in many places ... In Psalms, David himself said it, that sin separates. He calls sin iniquity. Iniquity, sin, separates us from God. And when we are separated from God, we do not have communication with him. And when we're at a loss of communication with God, our creator, we're lost. How do we find our way when we are not communicating with the one who is the way? So, the sin that we hold onto and that we don't want to identify keeps us from that intimacy with Christ.

And the second part of your question was how does it free us? Anything that has a hold of us that is not part of what God wants for us is going to weigh us down. And when we're weighed down, we're not going to feel free. We're not going to sleep well. We're not going to feel well physically. David even references in Psalms 32 the physical effect of sin and the way it weighs you down and the how it bats you like the sun's heat. So, there's a physical effect that sin will take on in our lives and will manifest itself if we do not deal with it. So, we have to get it out. And it's not because God doesn't know about it. It's because it's affecting us physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. And I'll tell you, sin will also affect our pocketbooks. It will affect our decisions, our relationships, everything.

For me, one of my strongholds in my life has been shopping. And there were some problems in our marriage and so, I thought every problem in my marriage could be solved by going to the store and buying something and making myself feel better. And that affected my pocketbook. I didn't deal with the sin. I did not deal with the problem in an appropriate way by speaking to my husband. I just went out and spent money. And it affected my pocketbook. It affected my relationship with my husband. It affected us financially. So, there is ... It manifests itself in countless ways.

And Jesus died so that we would be free. And when we don't live in freedom, we are, in my opinion ... this is just me ... when I don't live in freedom, let me just put it that way ... When I'm not living in freedom, I am leaving his gift of freedom and salvation at the foot of Calvary. I'm not experiencing it every single day. I'm just okay, my salvation was enough and I'm just going to go through life until you come and get me. That's not what we're supposed to do. We're not supposed to leave our gift of salvation at the foot of the cross. He rose, he's free, and he expects us to live that way.

Cheri: All right. I'm convicted.

Amy: I was going to make a snarky comment but it will get edited out anyway.

Cheri: Go ahead, Amy. You're perfect free to say whatever you want.

Wendy: Because Amy doesn't sin. So, wait, Amy does sin, right?

Amy: I was like maybe Cheryl will get set free now.

Well Wendy, you say that we can start living life operating on autopilot. What does that look like and what are the longterm effects of living on autopilot?

Wendy: Oh my goodness. I lived on autopilot and for a long time, but there's also still seasons where I find myself living in autopilot. Autopilot means just ... It lives ... Going with the flow of life without experiencing Christ. That's the best way ... on a daily and intimate relationship, in an intimate way. It is living our life just one second at a time, one minute at a time, as best we can. I call it also white knuckling. Just barely hanging on. And I'm sure there's maybe one or two people listening to the podcast today and they could identify with that. They're just barely holding on. And that's not how we're supposed to live. And I believe we go into autopilot, kind of tying back to what we just said, we can go into autopilot really easily when we haven't dealt with our sin.

For example, it's Sunday. Let's get up and go to church. Let's grab our Bibles. Let's go to church. We've gone to church. Let's go out and get our chicken after church. We go out and get our chicken or our Mexican, whatever. I'm in the South so we eat a lot of chicken here. Come home and start back in the daily routine. Just start back into the life the next week without experiencing every single day. And it's dangerous because we miss personal interactions with him in our every day life. And I look back sometimes, honestly girls, and it brings me to tears when I think about the opportunities that I have missed to experience him at the bank or at the grocery store or pumping gas or wherever I do life because I was just on autopilot. I'm just going to do the things I've got to do. I'm not going to look around. I'm not going to talk to people. I'm not going to interact with people. I'm just going to go on about my business. Who has not met Jesus because I was on autopilot? That terrifies my soul. Really, it does.

So, we have to have that constant interaction with the Holy Spirit all day long, not just on Sundays. Not just in our quiet times at home but have our experience with him and let him deal with us. If he asks us to go up to somebody and say hey, can I help you put your groceries in your cart? I see you're struggling. Or I would love to take your cart from you after I help you with your groceries. I've done that before and people have said no, I'm good. I'm like oh, okay. I hope you

have a good day. I didn't lose anything and I didn't gain anything but the Holy Spirit prompted me to go talk to this person. Those are the interactions that I'm talking about where we can experience him and we can make an impact on somebody's life but we missed those when we're on autopilot.

Cheri: Wow.

Amy: I love that you point out, it's not just neutral to live in autopilot but that it's dangerous. That's fantastic.

Wendy: Yes, yes.

Amy: So another thing that you said in the book that just really caught my heart is you said being caught between the charms of our culture and the wooing of the spirit can be toilsome. Tell us how that's looked in your life, Wendy.

Wendy: I spent a lot of my life trying to be accepted by everyone instead of pleasing the one that really mattered. And that's dangerous. And it was very dangerous for me because I got caught up in what the culture said was important, what the culture said I should do. How the culture says my marriage should look, how the culture says my children should behave. How the culture says my home should look, how I should be, what I should be participating in. And let me just very gently say this, I don't necessarily mean the secular culture because ...

Cheri: Oh girl.

Wendy: ... we're dangerously close to that in the church.

Cheri: Right.

Wendy: To where we are creating a church culture that is not attainable and it's killing relationships and it's killing the church. You have to serve ... and I'm a server, I get it. Your kids have to be involved in this program. Your kids need to do this. I mean, yeah. We can get to that place where we are trying to fit into the culture whether it's the secular culture or the church culture and we forget who we really need to be pleasing. And it's toilsome on a person to live in two cultures. I mean, it's very weighty and the demands are high.

And in the secular culture and our desire to be liked and be loved ... Who doesn't like to be liked and loved? Everybody does. Everybody does. But we are loved. We are liked by our Heavenly Father who has a really great plan for us. And so, we've got to seek intimacy with him so that we know what he wants from us and we can trust him in our obedience to him and we can live the life that he created us to live. And that life, his words to us, is not toilsome. It is not heavy. It is not

weighted. It is a rhythm of grace and freedom. And that's what he died to give us.

Amy: Beautifully said, I love that you encourage us to choose the wooing of the spirit. Gorgeous.

Wendy: For sure.

Amy: Cheri, do you want to go to the HSP questions or do you want ... what do you think?

Cheri: Go ahead and ask your next one. I think that's a good one.

Amy: All right. Wendy, can you unpack this quote for us, "Love is revealed in how we schedule our time." I have a feeling I'm not going to like your answer.

Wendy: I remember, and I think I shared this story in Wait and See, where I told my family that it was time for me to write a book and I was going to write a book. God had called me to write a book and I was going to write a book. And I was going to be stepping away from some of my responsibilities and I was going to really need their help. And I would have to go in my room ... and y'all, I took them to lunch and had this lecture. I mean, really this is sickening to me to actually even confess this out on the airwaves. But I said, because I knew what all the other authors had told me how they had lived their life when they were writing a book and I remember, girls, telling my kids when they would knock on the door, "Mom," such and such. And I would say, "I'm writing. I'm writing. I'm working. I'm writing." Seriously, this is how I behaved to my family.

And one day, I came out of one of my working sessions and my little girl ... She was little at the time ... and she loved grilled cheese sandwiches. And she wasn't little at the time either, she was probably 10. She loved grilled cheese sandwiches. And she hollered down from her room ... And when she was little, she called them gorilla cheeses, a gorilla cheese sandwich. So, that's what we call them around here. She'll even to this day at 21 come home from college and say, "Will you make me a gorilla cheese." I'm like, "Yes, I will." She hollered down because she had heard the door open and she hollered down and she said, "Mom, will you make me a gorilla cheese?" And in that moment, it was one of those wooings of the spirit, I wept because I could not remember the last time I had made her a gorilla cheese.

Love is spelled in time. And I talk about in the book that we are to consider opportunities to serve in the realm of our schedules because God will not call us to complicate our lives. What he calls us to will complement our lives, not complicate our lives. And so, I put that manuscript down because I realized in

that moment that I had not communicated love to my family. I had dictated what I was ... and what picture had I given them of God? So, love is really revealed in how we schedule our time and those of us who have children at home, those were our first ministry opportunities. Those of us that are married, that's our first ministry opportunity actually before our children and even after we have our children.

Now, what I'm finding later in life is what I thought my children were grown, my daughter is in college and my son just graduated high school and he has started his career and needs me. They need me a lot less. Now I'm in a season where I'm taking care of my parents. And so, love is spelled differently now with my family that is kind of up under my home, under my roof. Now I'm spelling love differently with my parents. So, there are seasons of this but yes, it's spelled T-I-M-E.

Cheri: So Amy is not the only one who is feeling convicted here. We have lots to discuss here. I love the complement, not complicate, and the whole idea of am I communicating to my family or dictating to my family? Whew, yeah.

You talk about calling ourselves by the right names. What do you mean by the right names and why is this so important?

Wendy: Going back to that question we talked about earlier about freedom and living free and those burdens being lifted off of us and living free, part of that is knowing who we are in Christ. And many people that I know and that I've ministered to and I'm sure that you girls have as well have come from places of complete and utter brokenness and devastation. And they've actually heard someone call them a loser or a failure or you're ugly. Why did I ever even marry you or I wish ... I have had somebody tell me that their parents said that they wish they had never been born. Or they wanted a girl and they got a boy so they named him a boy name. I mean, really? Seriously?

And so, what happens with us is that we grow up and we form our opinions of ourselves early on in life based on what others have told us about ourselves. And it's hard, it's very hard, to silence those when they have basically they have rooted themselves into our DNA. And we can't ... It's difficult to tell ourselves anything otherwise. And I mean, I know it's difficult because I have to tell myself the same thing. Just recently in the release of this book, the enemy has had some fun with me, playing back these old scripts of see, you are a failure. See, you can't write. See, nobody is going to buy this book. See, I told you. These things, because I was shaped this way when I was young, they rooted themselves. And I have uprooted them with truth. I know what truth is. I am a holy and dearly child loved by the King, most high King. I am forgiven. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I know what these truths are. But he still goes

back to the places of familiarity and those places where he's had success and victory in our lives.

And so, just in the recent release of this book, which has been a little over a month now, I have had to go back to this principle and tell myself out loud, "You are loved. You are whole. You are forgiven. You are redeemed. God has given you a gift." And I have to tell myself. And this is what I encourage people to do is to tell themselves this out loud, to speak truth over themselves. Don't just think it because the enemy is not omniscient. He can't hear your thoughts.

So, the only way that he is going to know that you know the truth is to tell him that you know the truth. And he can't be in ... deity and darkness cannot reign together. So, you are speaking deity. You are speaking truth. You are speaking life. You are speaking kingdom into the darkness of his lies. So, as crazy and as corny as that sounds sometimes, I am talking to myself out loud so that I can get the enemy away from me. And I have to go back to these truths, like I said, as much as I know them and as much as I teach them, I was like gosh, I'm still having to live this, Lord. Have I not learned this lesson yet? And no, you have not, Wendy. You still and how disappointed he must be sometimes at us because don't you know he goes we've been down this road again, my love. I love you and why do you want to live unloved? Why do you want to live unredeemed? Why do you want to live bound up when I freed you?

So, it's important. It's so important to know who we are and to tell the enemy that we know who we are.

Amy: So, practical and powerful, Wendy. Really.

Wendy: It's just ... and as crazy as it sounds, you have to talk out loud. And I do. I talk out loud too. And I tell them to get out of here. And sometimes I say the ugly word and I tell him to go back to and I say it out loud. I didn't say it so you don't have to bleep it out. I get so angry at him and when he messes with my family and my children, that's a lesson for another day but I yell out at him. I yell at him to get away.

Cheri: I love it. I love it. I love the physicalizing of it. That is wonderful.

Wendy: And there's some freedom in that right there. Talk about freedom. There's freedom in that because we have the power to bring down strongholds. Scripture tells us that. We have that within us and if we don't harness that power, we just cuddle back up and go back to those names and go back to those scripts that play in our head from a long time ago and that's not how we're supposed to live. And that's not why he died. He didn't die for us to live that way.

Cheri: I love it. Amy, I'll let you do the last question.

Amy: Okay. Wendy, what closing words of encouragement would you like to leave with our listeners today?

Wendy: That's a good question and I get asked that often. Like how would you sum up your ideas of Yes, No, and Maybe and how would you sum up this idea of the immeasurably more life. And this is how I sum it up. The immeasurably more life is the life that is greater than you could ever ask or imagine. It's super abundantly, more than anything that you could dream, how is that found? The super abundant, the immeasurably more life is found at the intersection of God's word and our obedience to it.

You can't find it apart from God's word or apart from our obedience to it. It's not possible. We're constantly going to be caught up in the culture. We're constantly going to be caught up in as your broadcast talks about, people pleasing. We're going to constantly be weighed down by the uns in our lives. But when we intersect our life with God's word and we obey it, that's where you're going to find immeasurably more than you could ever ask or imagine. And it's not a greater bank account, it's not a bigger house, it's not a newer model car, it's not manicures, pedicures, new hairdos, that's not what the immeasurably more life is. That's not what Paul was talking about because he wrote most of his letters from prison. From prison.

And a lot of your listeners I would venture to say are in a prison of their own. Maybe not a physical prison but they are in a prison of their own. Maybe a troubled marriage, a wayward child, they're stuck financially. They're bound to a job that they can't stand but they can't leave it. A troubled family. They're in a prison of their own. But what God wants is to show us, his children, that he can be immeasurably more even in a prison cell, even in a cancer ward, even with a bank account that has \$2.59 in it and I don't know how I'm going to pay my gas bill. You can find him when you look at his word and you read it and you take it in and you obey it. That's where you're going to find him.